
Why?

by L.E. Katterfeld

Published in *The Northwest Worker* [Everett, WA], whole no. 254 (Nov. 18, 1915), pg. 2.

Ever stop to think *why* we are organized?

Is it because we enjoy each other's company?

Is it because we admire each other's talents?

Is it because we love each other?

Some Socialists talk as though they think so. They give as a reason for not joining the organization that they don't like some individual who is active in it.

Or they are holding aloof because they consider the rest of us such a set of scamps.

Or they don't like the way we sometimes snarl at each other.

These good comrades have an entirely wrong view of the "why" of our organization.

It isn't a pink tea affair, nor a social club, nor a literary society, nor a love feast.

Our organization isn't based on mutual attraction.

It is based on necessity.

We got together *because we had to*.

I learned from bitter experience that alone I am helpless.

My comrade learned from his experience that alone he is weak.

We both learned from our experience that *together we are strong*.

It isn't a question of preference. It's a question of power.

It is a question of *hitting harder*.

• • • • •

I am trapped in a fire in a great building. Thousands of others are trapped like me. Our only exit is barred by massive doors. The doors are locked. My feeble hands can not push them open. Neither can yours, nor yours, nor yours.

But here lies a great beam. I can not even lift it alone. But together we can swing it aloft and use it as a battering ram to break our way to freedom.

Take hold there. Be quick about it.

The air is full of smoke. It is hard to breathe.

I don't know you. You don't know me. *But we both want to get out.*

I don't care if your breath stinks and your clothes offend the eye. I don't inquire into your ancestry nor your moral character. I don't ask you about your religion nor your opinions. I don't look at the color of your skin nor care what gibberish you talk. I may loathe your entire person, but—

The fire is scorching my back.

I must have air.

I want to get out. So do you.

Take hold with me. Heave to. *Hit hard.*

• • • • •

That is the why of our organization. Join the party. Pay your dues. ***Hit Harder!***

Edited by Tim Davenport

1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR · February 2016 · Non-commercial reproduction permitted.